Leicester,
May 25/68.

Dear friend Webb,

Getting home Saturday eve'g. I found your note of May 21st awaiting me, — pencilled at "New York"! I am so pleased to think of you and Mary Esther as being in this country! I shall believe it thoroughly pretty soon, I hope. But as I was away from home all last week, it is not probable I shall go away this week. If I c'd readily spare the time, I should like to attend the Free Religious Convention Thursday afternoon and Friday. I think you must not miss that meeting. Probably the leading American Radicals in Theology & Religion, — many of them prominent in Reform also, — will be there; — Emerson, Sam'l Johnson, S. Longfellow, Weiss (the Editor of T. Parker,) O. B. Frothingham, T. W. Higginson, Jr. — And I wish you could see one or two of the Unitarian gatherings. If Mr. G., or Frank, could get you introduced to James Freeman Clarke, or to Charles Lowe (the Gen. Sec.

of the Am. Unit^n. Assoc^n.) you would quickly get the entree to any meeting they were about to have. There is a fine spirit of work & co-operation in that body now, far more than ever before. It has got pretty well emancipated from the control of the old conservative leaders, — of whom some are dead, others shelved, and others still have fallen in, with what grace they can, ~~to~~ with the new movement. Clarke, Collyer (of Chicago), Tilden, Lowe, Hepworth, (& many more), are men with whose spirit you w^d. have great sympathy, — and I incline to think you w^d. not depart much from their theolog^l. & moral ideas, — and I wish you might see them. They have a great "festival" at the Music Hall on Tuesday afternoon (tomorrow), which you might attend if arriving in Boston tom^o. a.m., of which y^r. letter makes mention as probable.

But oh! the doleful weather! In the 33 springs I have seen, since I lived in Leicester, — and I have seen many late & wet ones — I am <u>certain</u> <u>I have</u>

never been one so late, so wet, so chill, & so dreary, as this, up to date! I feel positively ashamed of it, and have something of the feeling (when I think of you & Mr. Estlin) of being personally ungrateful, as I recal the unusually beautiful, clear, & pleasant weather I had, when in England, &c. the summer of 1843. But we'll have warm weather & beautiful yet. – I wish it might have been warm & dry while you were at Staten Island. It is a pleasant spot, but its advantages can't be seen in foggy, & stormy weather.

I welcome you to New England – to Massachusetts – & to Boston; & soon I hope to see you at my own house. – If I do not go to Boston this week, I am quite sure that Monday, June 1. will see me there; – when I shall seek you out, without delay. By the mid. of that week, you must start for the Longwood Meeting, if you attend it; – as I hope you will. And I trust Mr. Garrison can go, tho' it seems hard to ask it, as Fanny will

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have so recently arrived; but if he didn't get there until Frid. eve. or Saturday morning, it would do very well; — & then he could get directly back again. I am entertaining the hope of being there myself. If my wife is well enough to go, & feels equal to it, I intend to do so; in which case we would go on together; "what larks", as Joe Gargery would say. You cd. come here & get a "wet weather" glimpse at our place, & so we all start off together from here — probably it will be clearly bright by that time,

What with the N. Eng. Conv. (of one day, not 3, as we used to have, when Slavery was) the Free Religious Conv. of Thursd. p. m. & Friday, & perhaps other meetings, — & seeing friends in Boston & vicinity, yr. time will be, I imagine, fully occupied this week. There is to be, at some time during the week, a meeting in behalf of the American Freedmen's Commission, which, if properly launched & provided for, cannot fail to be of interest; but I fear it will not be as successful as it easily might, for I do not see it advertised or heralded as it ought to be. Mr. G. will know about it. It is the work to wh. the people composing the N. E. A. S. Convention ought to bend their whole powers, in my judgment; but, judging by past years, I suppose their time will be spent upon Andrew Johnson, the U. S. Senate, Judge Chase, & the Chicago Convention — easy & alluring topics of talk & vehement criticism.

Affectionately yrs. Samuel May Jr.

After I had sent my letter to you on Wednesday, I received yr. brief note — 3 or 4 days before dealing — and sent it to S.J. May as you requested. He is eager to see you.